

Experience with Porter Rockwell in Skull Valley

By Parley Austin

As he told his daughters, Parley Austin worked for Porter Rockwell, at least one summer, on his Skull Valley ranch. I remember grandpa saying that he put up hay and did “cowboying” jobs, including the catching and presumably the taming of wild horses. But he never liked that old “gun-slinger” Rockwell because Porter tried to cheat both Grandpa and his brother Hebe, out of their pay.

His Porter Rockwell days remind me of the John Wayne movie, “The Cowboys” in which John Wayne hired a bunch of teen-age boys to move a herd of cattle to market. They learned to be good cowhands, but also experienced the raw side of life along the trail. I suspect Porter Rockwell’s style, might have been bit like John Wayne’s movie character, except John Wayne in the movies, was a clean and cultured gentleman, compared to the greasy haired, scoundrel Porter Rockwell.

He was no doubt Lehi’s most controversial resident-held in both awe and fear by many Lehi residents-as a notorious killer, hard drinker and adventure drifter. It was said that Lehi kids were deathly afraid of Porter Rockwell.